

Spirit of the Amiga What is it?

It seems every day the prospect of a new and better Amiga draws a little closer, then is delayed a little further, to the point where one wonders if product will ever be delivered and promises kept. One unfortunate truth is that the community of current and former Amiga users that are the most likely to buy something next-generation is extremely small, to the point where it's difficult, if not impossible, to be financially successful even if every member of the Amiga community bought plenty of hardware and software. It's no wonder many of these folks are hedging their bets by playing to the Linux community, not to mention Amiga's own multi-platform Amiga DE/Anywhere. The other sad truth is that the community has developed a schism, and loyalties are divided between Amiga and MorphOS over who best embodies the "true spirit of the Amiga. This is evidenced by the wars of words over the message bases in Amiga News Network and other sites, and the dubious and confusing legal contentions between the two players don't help matters either. A pittance divided two or three ways might as well be nothing. While I'm very much looking forward to new hardware and operating system from all players — choice is supposed to be a good thing, after all — It's hard to imagine the Amiga regaining its spot as a strong alternative platform, or maybe even succeeding at all.

I didn't exactly intend to be a downer this month, but the editorial rants usually take on a life of their own. This one was inspired in part from an article linked

from the ANN site, stating that a lot of the wars of loyalties between fans of Amiga, Morph, or what have you have blinded people to what is really important. In the early days, people said the custom hardware design was what made the Amiga great. Nowadays people say the operating system is what makes the Amiga great, though the genuine advantages are more debatable with each revision.

The real truth is, people buy computers to do things, possibly creative things, and the machine that shows it can do some things quite well becomes desirable. Most people just want to play games, surf the web, and get some work done at home. Those people will most likely get a PC. In its early days, the Amiga had the hardware and software that made it easy, and inexpensive, to be creative with graphics, sound, music, animation, and multimedia, and play the occasional game or bring some work home. The Video Toaster bolstered that by practically inventing the niche of desktop video, making the creation of your own semi-pro video projects cheap compared to doing the same with other equipment. This was what truly made the Amiga great. But between dumb management decisions and bankruptcies, The Amiga lost its way. In today's world, the closest embodiment of that spirit may be the various Macintosh models. Before you pull out the pitchforks, think

about it for a second. It's possible, with little to no additional hardware or software, to shoot a video, edit it on the Mac and burn the project onto a DVD — not to mention surf the net, mix your own CD's, play a few games, and take a little work home. I could see the Amiga in this position if the spirit that brought us DeluxePaint and the Video Toaster swept the Amiga into its future. I don't know if the Amiga can recapture even a fraction of its original spirit, but I'd love to see. And if it can't, at least I know where to follow a facsimile of that spirit.

...Eric W. Schwartz, Editor
AmiTech-Dayton Gazette

Gordon Moore On Moore's Law

Last week, Intel cofounder Gordon Moore was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House, along with several other recipients. Moore is most famous perhaps for Moore's Law, which states that the number of transistors on CPUs doubles about every 18 months. Moore defined the law 30 years ago, and it has had dead-on predictive power since. Following the receipt of his award, Moore took questions from a few journalists.

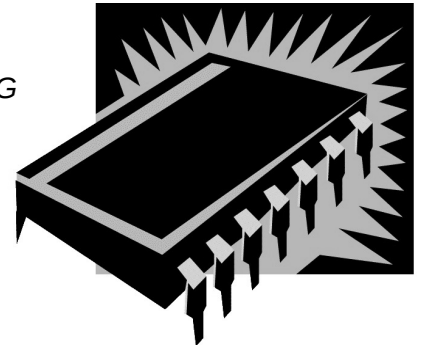
In answer to questions about whether Moore's Law would

extend for years into the future as a result of nanotechnology and other technology breakthroughs, Moore said nanotechnology wasn't necessarily the Holy Grail.

"We'll go a long way by doing what we've done in the past. We'll get down to 30-nanometer dimensions or so. Nanotechnology, where you're taking the approach from the other end and coming up is certainly going to be interesting, but I don't think — at least not at first, maybe never — that it's going to replace the kinds of things we've been doing. Making a small device is one thing, but hooking up a million of them on a chip is something completely different."

Moore also reminded journalists that he had changed the law once already, in 1975. "I went from predicting that complexity would double every year to doubling every 18 months. Doubling time will slow down when we can no longer take advantage of just making things smaller. We could go to four or five years."

...From the CUCUG
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AmigaMCCC News

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August Calendar

August 12 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Ctr.
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

August 12 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Friday's
Loop 820 & Bedford Euless Road

August 15 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — SMU Building
Collins Blvd. & International Pkwy, Richardson

August 24 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

Editor's Comments

For the first time in five months I have a good internet connection. I had to go with DSL after all. Apparently there is no cable in the neighborhood I just moved to. But the DSL company I selected this time (DirecTV DSL) gave me an installation process that didn't trash my PC. Yes, there is still software required, but it installed quickly and painlessly.

In preparation, in case things didn't go well, I bought a USB 2.0 external drive and backed up my system. It's a good backup option... but that's another story.

...Bill Raecke